Seminar on Empowering the Socially and Economically Marginalised Groups

*327 SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Seminar on Empowering the socially and economically marginalised Groups was organised at New Delhi recently?

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether during the Seminar, industrialists and industrial houses were requested to recruit Muslims, minortie Dalits, Tribals and women without any discrimination;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government propose to get the suggestions as in part (c) above implemented early; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) organised a half-day seminar on Empowering the Socially and Economically Marginalised Groups on 3rd July, 1995 at New Delhi. The Union Minister for Welfare inaugurated the Seminer. The welcome and theme address was presented by Shri A.K. Rungta, President, FICCI. Ms. Mira Seth, Member, Planning Commission, delivered the keynote address.

The panel of speakers comprised Dr. R.K. Nayak Secretary (Rural Areas and Employment), Ministry of Rural Development, Dr.(Mrs.) Sarala Gopalan, Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Humen Resources Development, Shri S.K. Basu, Secretary, National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Shri M. Varadarajan, Member, National Commission for Minorities. The deliberations focussed on empowering the deprived sections of the society by promoting education training and employment opportunities and the role corporate sector could play in the process.

(c) to (f) The Union Minister for Welfare in his sreech in the Seminar, *inter alia*, urged the industry to empower the Muslims, Minorities, Dalits, Tribals and other Backard Classes (OBCs) by employing them in their business organisations.

Proposal by Sail to Produce Special Quality Steel

*328. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) have any proposal to produce special quality steel keeping in view the changing market scenario;

(b) if so, the instructions given to different steel plants in the matter;

(c) the plan drawn up and the steps taken by different steel plants in that direction for 8th plan and 9th plan; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (d) In its integrated steel plants, Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) is already producing special quality steel such as Boiler Quality plates, LPG Sheets, GRNO Electrical Sheets, auto body sheets etc. The production of such items is proposed to be raised in view of the changing market requirement.

Certain value added production have been identified for development by each plant keeping in view their technological capability, the market requirements etc. The plants are being modernised and technologically upgraded, which will equip them to produce higher proportion of special quality steels. The development of some of these products involves inter plant co-operation with active involvement of experts from the Research and Development Centre for Iron and Steel of SAIL.

Urban Transport Consortium Fund

*329. SHRI PRAGADA KOTAIAH:
DR. SHRIKANT RAM
CHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS & EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the proposed target of providing funds for the Urban Transport Consortium Fund have not been fulfilled in the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, what is the proposed target and the actual allocation therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to ensure that proper funds are provided for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SMT. SHEILA KAUL): (a) to (c) The VIII plan allocation for the Urban Transport Consortium Fund has been Rs. 4.60 crores. The fund was primarily intended to meet the planning and implementation requirements of urban transport projects through feasibility studies and equity/loan participation.

The annual allocations by the Planning commission for the aforesaid purposes have been increased during the last three years and Rs. 17.20 crores has been spend during the first three years of the VIII Plan. In addition, a provision of Rs. 9 crores has also been made for 1995-96. The requirements would depend on the pace of development of different projects for which studies had been commissioned/ conducted and no specific target for the fund has been fixed.

Propagation of Low-Cost Building Materials by Government.

*330. DR. ISHWAR CHANDRA GUPTA: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS & EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to propagate the use of low-cost building materials, based on local resources and waste;

(b) whether Government propose to supply the low-cost materials through the Nirman Kendras (building centres);

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether abnormal rise in the cost of cement during the last six months has hampered the housing activities; and

(e) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to reduce the cost of cement?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SMT. SHEILA KAUL): (a) one of the main goals of the National Housing Policy is to promote the use of appropriate and energy-saving building materials and cost-effective construction technologies. In order to achieve this goal, a series of steps have been proposed in the National Housing Policy. The following specific steps have been taken to implement the policy directive:—

(i) A Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) has been set up at the national-level for the selection, extension and promotion of proven technology and building materials and the use of materials conforming to affordable standards and quality construction.

(ii) A national network of Building Centres has been established with a view to providing cost-effective and innovative technology and training and upgrading the skills of artisans.

(iii) Some of the proven low-cost technologies have been incorporated in the national standards and specifications laid down by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD). The State agencies have been advised to incorporate these in their schedules of specifications.

(iv) With a view to promoting the production and use of building materials based on agricultural/ industrial wastes like flyash, phosphogypsum, red mud, etc., financial incentives, viz., excise duty and customs duty exemption/ concession, have been extended.

(v) The entire range of building materials produced by various Building Centres included in the national network are eligible for excise duty exemption.

(vi) Certain other basic incentives, such as free supply of flyash, allotment of land near the source of generation of flyash at concessional rates and terms, have also been provided.

(vii) The Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) is providing both equity support and term loan to building material manufacturing units using agricultural/industrial wastes, etc. The National Housing Bank (NHB) is providing equity support to such units.

(viii) HUDCO and the NHB have been using their financial leverage while approving the housing schemes in different parts of the country to